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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/531,012	04/12/2005	Gerben De Jong	NL 020995	2602

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PHILIPS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & STANDARDS
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EXAMINER

LAMB, CHRISTOPHER RAY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2627

DATE MAILED: 06/23/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/531,012	DE JONG ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Christopher R. Lamb	2627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,4 and 9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 2,5-8 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/12/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 3, 4, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Engebretson et al. (US 5,706,352).

Regarding claim 1:

Engebretson discloses an electronic circuit comprising an amplifier stage (Fig. 2) having an input (12) for receiving an input signal and an output (82) for supplying an output signal, wherein, during operation,

the strength of the output signal increases in response to an increasing strength of the input signal as long as the strength of the input signal has not exceeded an input reference level (shown in Fig. 3: compression ratio 2),

characterized in that the strength of the output signal is kept approximately constant when the strength of the input signal has exceeded the input reference level but has not exceeded a further input reference level (true at the inflection point in Fig. 3), and

that the strength of the output signal decreases in response to an increasing strength of the input signal when the strength of the input signal has exceeded the further input reference level (shown in Fig. 3).

Regarding claim 3:

In Engebretson the further input reference level is approximately equal to the input reference level (shown in Fig. 3).

Regarding claim 4:

In Engebretson the input signal is an input current and the output signal is an output current (inherent: the input is a microphone, the output is a speaker, so the signals must be currents).

Regarding claim 9:

This is a method claim corresponding to claim 1 and is met when the circuit operates.

3. Claims 1, 3 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Evans (US 4,660,122).

Regarding claim 1:

Evans discloses an electronic circuit comprising an amplifier stage (Fig. 2) having an input for receiving an input signal (V_1) and an output for supplying an output signal (iQ_i), wherein, during operation,

the strength of the output signal increases in response to an increasing strength of the input signal as long as the strength of the input signal has not exceeded an input reference level (Case I in Fig. 3),

characterized in that the strength of the output signal is kept approximately constant when the strength of the input signal has exceeded the input reference level but has not exceeded a further input reference level (Case II in Fig. 3), and

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that the strength of the output signal decreases in response to an increasing strength of the input signal when the strength of the input signal has exceeded the further input reference level (Case III in Fig. 3).

Regarding claim 3:

In Evans the further reference level is approximately equal to the input reference level (Fig. 3: they are both near zero).

Regarding claim 9:

It is a method claim corresponding to claim 1 and is met when the apparatus operates.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 2, 5-8, and 10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding claims 2 and 10:

The closest prior art of record, Evans, does not teach or suggest that the output signal cannot become lower than an output reference level when the strength of the input signal has exceeded the further input reference.

Regarding claim 5-6:

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The closest prior art of record, Engebretson, does not teach or suggest the specific current path details claimed. These in combination with the other features of the claim render it allowable over the prior art of record.

Regarding claim 8:

The closest prior art of record, Engebretson, does not teach or suggest using the circuit in an optical recording apparatus.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher R. Lamb whose telephone number is (572) 272-5264. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Korzuch can be reached on (571) 272-7589. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

CRL 6/13/06


THANG V. TRAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER